

Attorney Docket No.: NE-0002
Inventors: Borgstahl et al.
Serial No.: 10/681,874
Filing Date: October 7, 2003
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This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original): A digital topography imaging system comprising;

- a) an x-ray emitting source;
- b) a sample holder;
- c) a charge coupled device (CCD) camera with antiblooming circuitry which reduces pixel image corruption due to CCD camera pixel overloading wherein the camera converts x-ray signals to electrical signals without the use of phosphor and measures reflection profiles from the x-ray emitting source after x-rays are passed through a sample; and

d) a means for acquiring and displaying images of a sample;
wherein x-rays from the x-ray emitting source pass through a sample, and are converted by the CCD camera into electrical signals so that the resulting x-ray reflection profiles are measured and the structure of the sample is acquired and displayed.

Claim 2 (original): The digital topography imaging system of claim 1 wherein the CCD camera has a pixel size of less than 10 μm .

Claim 3 (original): The digital topography imaging system of claim 1 wherein the x-ray source has a shutter, allowing for variable exposure times.

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Claim 4 (original): A method for digital topography imaging comprising;

a) placing a sample in the sample holder of the system of claim 1;

b) positioning the sample holder between the x-ray emitting source and the CCD camera;

c) exposing the sample to x-rays from the x-ray emitting source;

d) measuring the x-ray reflection angles of the x-rays that are passed through the sample from the x-ray emitting source with the CCD camera to form a raw image; and

e) processing the raw image measured by the CCD camera with a computer program to provide a clearer image of the crystal structure of the sample.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 4 wherein raw images provided by the CCD camera are computer processed using wavelet transforms, and histograms to provide clear images of the sample

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 5 wherein the raw images are computer processed using a multi step method comprising;

a) subtracting a dark current image of equal exposure to remove dark current noise;

b) removing electric ripple noise with a multiple filter wavelet transform;

c) using a histogram cutoff filter to cut remaining background noise;

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d) using a median filter to clean the speckle nature of the data;

e) using a wavelet transform to enhance resolution;

f) filtering remaining low level noise with a histogram filter; and

g) digitizing the data into an integer range wherein each numerical value is associated with a corresponding color, so that clear images of the sample are displayed.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the multiple filter wavelet transform comprises a low frequency decomposition filter, a high frequency decomposition filter, a low frequency reconstruction filter and a high frequency reconstruction filter.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 4 further comprising animating the processed images to show the diffraction of crystal volume versus the oscillation angle.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim 4 ~~wherein the digital topography imaging system may be employed to determine~~ further comprising determining the crystalline structure of a sample.